Doing Research Evaluation

Global Development Network (GDN)

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Owner	Lydia Tanner
Phone	020 8960 7067
Email	l.tanner@jigsawconsult.com

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Abbreviations and acronyms

AFD	Agence Française de Développement
ANU	Australian National University
CADEP	Center of Analysis and Dissemination of the Paraguayan Economy
CAPEC	Cellule d'Analyse de Politiques Economiques du Cires
CEREG	Centre d'Étude et de Recherche en Économie et Gestion
CICP	Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace
DFID	Department for International Development
EA	External advisor
FGD	Focus group discussion
GDN	Global Development Network
GRADE	Grupo de Análisis para el Desarrollo/ Group for the Analysis of Development
HE	Higher education

HEI	Higher education institution
ICSSR	Indian Council of Social Science Research
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IRD	Institut de Recherche pour le Développement
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
PI	Principal investigator
ToR	Terms of reference
UGC	University Grants Commission

Executive summary

This evaluation considers the effectiveness of the pilot phase of Global Development Network's (GDN) *Doing Research* project.

Doing Research invited grantee research teams to carry out original and comprehensive studies into the social science research environment in their countries. During the pilot phase, seven research studies were funded in eleven countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The pilot phase was intended to lead to the creation of an index for social science research in developing and transitional countries.

The primary objective of this evaluation was to assess the effectiveness of the pilot approach and the quality of the comparative frameworks and related indicators developed by the grantee research teams. The evaluation explores the perceptions of stakeholders, provides lessons learned, and gives recommendations on GDN's approach to capacity building and for the scale-up phase of the project.

The evaluation adopted a mixed-methods approach designed to gather rich qualitative data on the pilot phase of *Doing Research*. Qualitative data was gathered through a review of background documents and analysis of final research outputs, as well as in-depth semi-structured interviews with 16 members of research team members, five external advisors (EAs) and two GDN programme staff. Interviews were conducted at both mid-line and end-line to allow comparison of perspectives over time. They were designed to explore information on strengths and weaknesses of the research process, relevance of the research in each context, the applicability of the research to scale-up and the support provided by GDN and the EAs. An online survey was also sent to all research teams, garnering seven responses (representing six out of seven teams), generally submitted by the Principal Investigator (PI). The report addresses the limitations of the methodological design, in particular the low number of responses submitted to the online survey and limitations arising from potential reporting bias during interviews.

The evaluation report is structured in three parts. First, a background chapter introduces the project and describes the methodology for the evaluation. Next, the report describes a series of four process-oriented case studies from Cambodia; Cameroon and Ivory Coast; India and Bangladesh; Peru, Paraguay and Bolivia. The case studies were developed using a common framework that comprises of six linear stages in the development of the research projects: selection, methodology, research, peer-review, dissemination and scale-up (see Annex 4). Finally, the synthesis chapter identifies common themes from the case studies and incorporates analysis of the five OECD-DAC criteria for measuring development assistance: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

A notable strength of the project was the level of contextualisation of the research outputs. All participating research teams said that they valued the project for its relevance and originality. In particular, the flexibility afforded to each research team enabled teams to identify areas of focus, to explore the factors most relevant to their context, and to draw heavily on their knowledge of the social science research environment.

The team's research outputs were assessed for originality, completeness, validity, whether the research was confirmable and cultural sensitivity. The majority of reports provided a robust conceptual background, acknowledging the historical context on their research environment. The Indonesia report was particularly well-structured using a three tier framework that analysed the impact of past and present policy frameworks on the research environment at the macro, meso and micro-levels. Furthermore, the disciplinary diversity of the research teams had a significant impact on the approach taken and quality of the research outputs. The lack of interdisciplinary diversity in some teams (in particular, India and Bangladesh, Cameroon and Ivory Coast, where all lead team members were economists) and the overemphasis on quantitative data (in Cameroon and Ivory Coast) was a challenge to developing a holistic understanding of the social science research environment. The evaluation also found that the broad scope of the objectives compounded the research teams' inability to address all research questions and that insufficient funding led to some teams working underfunded or partially self-funded.

The level of non-financial support from GDN was found to compare favourably to that given by other research donors. In particular, the level of personalised support, the quality of academic input, and the flexibility and trust afforded to researchers were highlighted as important factors in the success of the project. GDN organised two workshops for the research teams, EAs and the GDN team, which facilitated face-to-face contact and provided a platform for cross-team learning and peer review. The Cambodia, Indonesia and Cameroon teams identified the peer-review workshop as being the aspect of support from GDN that had the most significant influence on their research, since it provided opportunity to receive feedback at an early stage. Similarly the contribution of EAs, who were experts in their research fields, was generally seen as very valuable.

Participants expressed plans to further the research through journal publication, further research, and the expansion of networks. In general, the sustainability of the project depends on the availability of funding for the research teams. Nevertheless, the researchers valued the importance of network building and were very successful in expanding research networks, both on a national and international level. The quality of research dissemination and links with public policy has however been variable. Dissemination activities were strongest where good partnerships were formed, as in the case of Indonesia, Cameroon and the Ivory Coast.

Overall, interdisciplinary research teams were better placed to develop a holistic understanding of the social science research environment. The inclusion of interdisciplinary perspectives was largely dependent upon the make up of the teams at the outset. It would therefore be beneficial to place greater emphasis on interdisciplinary teams in the selection process. Many of the weaknesses in the final outputs - such as an overemphasis on quantitative research - were identified as risks at the selection phase.

The pilot phase has enabled GDN to develop a community of stakeholders with interest in the second phase of the project: scale-up. The Latin American and Indonesian studies were identified as most relevant to the scale up, whereas studies of larger countries like India were less easy to use for synthesis. The pilot phase faced an important dichotomy regarding the level of flexibility given to research teams. Research teams were given significant flexibility in identifying specific research questions and methodologies, which facilitated the production of highly contextualised work. It also allowed a broad range of methodologies and frameworks to emerge, providing noteworthy learning for the scale-up. Nevertheless, this also limited the

comparability of cross-country findings. For example, in the case of India and Bangladesh, it was difficult to find commonalities in the research reports despite the shared methodology.

The report concludes with a summary of key findings and recommendations for GDN, mentors, research teams and donors. Key recommendations relate to mentoring, workshops, selection process, scale-up and dissemination. In particular, the findings suggest GDN should:

1. Place a greater emphasis on identifying multidisciplinary research teams at the call for proposals and selection stages.
2. Facilitate connections between research teams and multiple advisors with different areas of expertise. This would provide researchers with an opportunity to access range of specific expertise beyond the mentoring relationship, for example, through shorter-term connections to advisors with specific disciplinary backgrounds.
3. Explore digital platforms that can facilitate greater collaboration and discussion between research teams outside in-person workshops.
4. Provide additional funding following the production of a final report, ring-fenced for the dissemination phase, to support policy dialogues, events, meetings and other opportunities for policy engagement.

Background

1. Introduction

1.1. Organisation context

The Global Development Network (GDN) is a public international organization that supports high-quality, policy-oriented, social science research in developing and transition countries. It supports researchers with financial resources, global networking, and access to information, training, peer review and mentoring. GDN acts on the premise that better research leads to more informed policies and better, more inclusive development.[1] Since it was founded in 1999, GDN has supported close to 4,000 grantees from 132 developing and transition countries through grants, training, mentoring and networking services.

1.2. Overview of the *Doing Research* project

This report is an evaluation of the GDN project *Doing Research: Assessing the Environment for Social Science Research in Developing Countries* (henceforth referred to as *Doing Research)*. The project was initiated in April 2014 and is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development, and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

The overarching objective of the *Doing Research* project is to build a systematic framework to compare the research environment across countries and across time. This evaluation covers the *first* of the three project phases:

1. A pilot phase, consisting of seven country and multi-country case studies

[1] For more information see GDN website: http://gdn.int/html/page3.php?MID=12&SID=52&SSID=91

2. A synthesis phase, drawing together the results of the case studies and developing a concept note, overarching framework and methodology for the scale-up, and the requirements in terms of resources for cross-country data collection
3. A scale-up phase, expanding the research to systematically document the research environment in a large number of countries

The pilot phase funded seven research studies that were intended to develop a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the social science research environment in the selected countries. The pilot was designed to inform the synthesis and scale-up phases of the project, including the development and operationalisation of a systematic methodological framework for measuring the social science research environment.

The stated objectives of the *Doing Research* pilot project were to:

- Identify and develop objective measures (both qualitative and quantitative) of key elements of the research environment that have significant impact on the ability to train researchers in developing countries to undertake quality research and communicate it effectively to a broad range of stakeholders.
- Expose important shortcomings and barriers to research to the relevant stakeholders, including academia, policy-makers, civil society and donor organizations in order to bring into mainstream the issues related to the research environment, research support and funding and the demand for it as one of the key policy concerns in developing countries.
- Derive a systematic framework to compare the research environment across countries and across time.

The pilot phase began with an inception workshop in New Delhi in April 2014, which brought together 38 participants to discuss the project, methodologies, and terms of reference for the case studies. GDN then released a call for proposals for *Doing Research*, inviting applications from multi-disciplinary research teams from Africa, South and East Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. The duration of the research project was planned as 12 to 15 months, with funding up to a maximum ceiling of 43,000 USD. In total, 187 proposals were received.

Seven research teams from 11 countries were selected for funding. This included three multi-country studies — Cameroon and Ivory Coast, India and Bangladesh, and Peru, Paraguay and Bolivia — and four single-country studies — Cambodia, Indonesia, Niger and South Africa. GDN provided research funding, paired each team with an external advisor (EA), and gave ongoing advice in developing the methodology and research report. One member of each research team, the EAs, and GDN staff attended a two-day inception workshop on research methodology in Johannesburg, South Africa, in January 2015. Two members of each team, as well as EAs and GDN staff, were invited to a global peer review workshop in New Delhi, India, in October 2015. The research was completed in early 2016, and teams contributed to a series of webinars and events to disseminate findings.

1.3. Purpose of the evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to track and analyse the extent to which the project is achieving its stated objectives. It responds to the questions and objectives set out in the Terms of Reference (ToR), which fall within five overarching themes:

1. Assess the effectiveness of the approach and strategies followed by the grantee research teams. Examine the quality of the research reports and the data being collected by the research teams.
2. Assess the effectiveness of the *Doing Research* interventions, including methodological and peer review workshops, peer review and dissemination events. Examine the quality of participation at events.

3. Assess the relevance, usefulness and quality of the comparative framework and related indicators developed by the research teams.
4. Explore stakeholder perceptions of the contribution of GDN.
5. Provide lessons learnt and recommendations on developing indicators.

2. The evaluation methodology

2.1. Overview of approach

The evaluation was conducted by Jigsaw Consult between October 2015 and July 2016. It adopted a mixed-method approach that combines qualitative data gathered in interviews and through an online survey, and an analysis of the project's research outputs. The methodology included the following elements:

- A review of relevant background documents
- Individual and group interviews with research teams at mid-line and end-line (16 participants)
- Individual interviews with external advisors at mid-line and end-line (five participants)
- Group interviews with GDN programme staff at mid-line and end-line (two participants)
- An online survey distributed to research teams with seven responses (representing six out of seven teams)
- A review and analysis of final research reports

Jigsaw adopted a systematic, evidence-based approach to qualitative and quantitative data analysis, using a coding process where appropriate to link back to the key evaluation themes. The approach ensured that the analysis engaged with the substance and weighting of interviewee responses, rather than relying solely on anecdotal feedback.

The analysis is structured in two parts. First, a series of four process-oriented case studies that were developed using the framework described in Annex 4. The framework includes six linear stages in the development of the research projects. Each stage includes actions and processes at both the global level and the country-research-team level.

Second is an analysis of the OECD-DAC criteria for measuring development assistance: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

2.2. Document review

The research began with a review of relevant background documents relating to the *Doing Research* project, including the project concept note, call for proposals, workshop summaries, and documents related to the selection process.

2.3. Interviews

The evaluation team interviewed 16 members of research teams, five EAs and steering committee members, and two GDN staff members. Each interview lasted 30 to 60 minutes.

Interviews followed a semi-structured approach that enabled comparison of research teams while allowing for flexible conversation regarding the key elements of the research in each context. The objective of the interview templates was to go into as much depth as possible within the time available. The questions were designed to elicit information about the strengths and weaknesses of the research process at different stages, the relevance of the research in each context, the support provided by GDN and the EAs to the research teams, and the applicability of the research to the scale-up. Follow-up exploratory questions were asked throughout, enquiring 'why' and 'how', where appropriate in order to understand the reasons

for the successes and challenges described by the respondents. The interview templates are provided in Annex 7.

Interviews were conducted at two significant points in the research process. An initial set of interviews was held at GDN's Global Peer Review workshop in New Delhi in October 2015. At this stage, group interviews were conducted with two members of each of the following research teams: Cambodia, Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire, Indonesia, and Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru. A group interview was conducted with three members of the India and Bangladesh team. Interviews were also conducted with five EAs and steering committee members, including the EAs of the Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire, India and Bangladesh, Indonesia, Niger and South Africa teams. Interviews were conducted with the principal investigators (PIs) of the Niger and South Africa teams over Skype.

A second set of interviews was held with each of the research teams in June 2016 over Skype. This interview was timed to follow submission of the final research reports and the beginning of dissemination activities. All were individual interviews, apart from one group interview with the Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru team. The evaluation team also chose to re-interview EAs who participated in the first set of interviews, to allow comparison of perspectives over time.

Interviews are referenced throughout the evaluation report using an individual ID number. A list of interviews and ID numbers can be viewed in Annex 3.

2.4. Online survey

An online survey was hosted on SurveyMonkey and distributed to the research teams via email. The survey was designed by Jigsaw Consult and refined based on feedback from the GDN team. The survey comprised 19 questions, including:

- Three questions to identify the respondent
- Four closed 'Likert five-point scale scoring' questions, giving participants the opportunity to rate different aspects of the *Doing Research* project
- Ten open questions addressing the objectives of the programme, the research process and the efficiency of GDN interventions
- Two multiple-choice questions exploring the scale of dissemination activities.

The online survey questions can be found in Annex 7. Seven responses were submitted, representing all research teams except for South Africa (two responses were received from the Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru team). Three respondents requested anonymity.

2.5. Review of research outputs

A common analytical framework was developed for the analysis of research reports, in order to ensure consistency and comparability across the studies. It included the following elements:

- The conceptual framework employed
- The number of different types of institutions analysed
- The research methods employed
- The qualitative and quantitative indicators described in the research
- The comparability to indicators used by other teams
- A summary of the feedback given at the global peer review workshop

The framework used six criteria to assess the quality of the research outputs and their comparability and relevance to the scale-up. The six criteria drew on the objectives of the Doing Research project, as well as the work of Guba and Lincoln (1981) on assessing the quality of qualitative research (see Annex 5). The six criteria used in the analysis are:

- Conceptual framing and originality

- Appropriateness/completeness
- Validity/credibility
- Confirmable
- Dependability and cultural sensitivity
- Transferability/comparability

2.6. Limitations and challenges

The team completed all activities outlined in the evaluation plan. There were two notable limitations.

Firstly, only seven responses were submitted to the online survey. The amount of quantitative data available for analysis was therefore limited. Although responses were requested from multiple team members, generally only the PI submitted a response. The survey responses therefore do not represent a broad sample of research team members. Interviews were conducted with one to three team members.

Secondly, there are limitations arising from a potential reporting bias among interviewees, who may perceive positive responses regarding the research process and dissemination activities to be in their self-interest, or who may be reluctant to share weaknesses or criticism. However, at the outset of each interview, the evaluation team explained the purpose of the evaluation and the desire to learn lessons for the next phase.

Process oriented case studies

This section provides the four process-oriented case studies that were developed using the framework described in Annex 4.

3. Cambodia

The Cambodia research was selected for a case study, as it provides an interesting example of a project that drew heavily on a junior research team.

3.1. Selection and methodology

The Cambodia research team decided to use the GDN grant to train and mentor young researchers to participate in the research with the aim of 'building capacity' (ID5).

The action research approach points to the institute's role on the boundary of academic and practical research. At the outset of the study, CICP organised a two-day social science research methods training course for student researchers. Sixteen students were trained, three of whom became regular participants in the *Doing Research* project, and seven worked intermittently on the project alongside their studies. Two joined other research projects.[2]

3.2. Research and peer review

The study presents a significant amount of primary data collected from a variety of research

[2] "Doing Research in Cambodia: Making Models that Build Capacity". Presentation at peer review workshop, slide 12.

institutes (all of which are given equal weighting). The inclusion of research produced in NGOs is in stark contrast to other team's research reports. It raises an important dilemma about the relative importance of blue-sky and theoretical research. For example, the South Africa report comes with opposite assumptions about the cultural importance of academic institutions for understanding social context and challenges.

The study includes a clear statement of the problems and challenges associated with doing research in Cambodia. The research process raised unexpected results regarding the prevalence of donor-driven research, which is often of low quality but has a high policy impact. Another important finding is the disconnect between research policy, including the statements of research administrators, and the experience of researchers and students (IV5).

At the outset of the project, the team received strong support from an EA based in Cambodia. Once he had left the country, they had limited external input, although GDN staff continued to provide support (IV15), and acting EA, Dr Ian Carter, provided feedback on the draft report.

The PI argued that the workshops were the most important aspect of GDN's support, firstly, because he was able to network with senior researchers in other countries, leading to ongoing connections, and secondly, because he learned that many of the challenges faced in doing research in Cambodia are also experienced in other countries (ID15).

3.3. Dissemination and scale up

Presentations and workshops have been held at six universities across Cambodia (Sovachana Pou, online survey). This included returning to the universities where research was conducted to disseminate findings and offer recommendations. A report launch event was attended by a member of GDN staff. The final report was distributed to policy makers, university presidents and vice presidents, deans, researchers, lecturers, students, CSOs, think tanks and the diplomatic corps. Feedback on the research outcomes was also collected from students, university leadership, department heads and lecturers. An interactive web resource was developed and launched with the aim of providing an open source data space and networking platform for researchers, including news of funding and research opportunities. [3]

The action research approach adopted here has facilitated research capacity development for students. The research team see their report as a stepping stone to improving the social science research environment in Cambodia (ID15). The PI intends to expand upon and utilise the materials developed through the mentoring component of the project in order to build research capacity in higher education institutions (HEIs) (Sovachana Pou, online survey). The team plan to translate the final report into the Cambodian language and donate a copy to all university libraries in Cambodia. This is possible because of underspend elsewhere in the budget. GDN's flexibility in diverting funding to translation and dissemination activities was seen as positive (ID15).

4. Cameroon and Ivory Coast

The Cameroon and Ivory Coast research study provides an interesting example of a project that uses a quantitative research methodology.

[3] Doing Research in Cambodia web resource, http://www.researchkh.org/

4.1. Selection and methodology

The Centre d'Étude et de Recherche en Économie et Gestion (CEREG) at l'Université de Yaoundé in Cameroon and the Cellule d'Analyse de Politiques Economiques du Cires (CAPEC) in Ivory Coast adopted a predominantly econometric approach to studying the research environment in their respective countries. The lead researcher in each country is an economist, as are the majority of team members.

Following the inception workshop in Johannesburg, the lead researcher recognised the need to include aspects of qualitative data collection and analysis in the methodology (ID2). The research team received similar advice from their EA, Michel Carton, and from GDN. However, the study remained predominantly quantitative in its approach. The research team felt that they would have valued input from an advisor with a background in economics at this stage, in order to provide more in-depth suggestions on the methodology; but they also appreciated the value of having input from a mentor of another discipline to widen their perspective (ID2).

4.2. Research and peer review

The teams conducted fieldwork in their two respective countries separately, although they maintained regular contact. The opportunity to meet and work together face to face in Abidjan in April, in Casablanca in June, and in New Delhi in October 2015 was beneficial (ID21).

The teams experienced significant challenges in the research process. Three months of strikes in Ivory Coast prevented the team from surveying researchers (ID2). It was also difficult to secure responses to questionnaires, particularly from senior staff. The research team extended the survey deadline in order to improve the response rate. They found that their questionnaire was too long — taking 45 minutes to an hour to complete.

The team had to account for significant travel time owing to the distances between universities (ID2). The research team found budgetary constraints to be one of their biggest challenges. In order to complete the research at the desired scale, the lead researcher in Ivory Coast decided to finance part of the research through his think tank (ID21).

In addition, the team were aware of the need to explore research demand in order to create a fuller analysis of the research environment. Unfortunately, they found this was not possible with the time and funding available, particularly given the ambitious scope of the research conducted on the supply side (ID14).

The findings were presented as two separate studies. The EA's perspective was that comparing the two countries — particularly given the ambitious scale of the methodology, and the limited time and budget available — was not feasible from the outset. Doing the two studies at the same time would have necessitated further limitations in the scope of the research (ID14).

The researchers felt that the EA contributed significantly to the direction of their research. For example, he encouraged them to consider the governance of research and the impact of this on the research environment, and provided guidance on setting out policy recommendations (ID22). The team's EA expressed concern that the lack of interdisciplinary diversity within the research team and heavily quantitative approach weakened the study and limited the extent to which the team could explore institutional, political or historical dimensions of the research environment, or reflect on the social sciences beyond economics (ID14).

The study provides proof that certain factors correlate with productivity, such as infrastructure and capacity building, which are challenges in all of the countries studied. However, this is also somewhat self explanatory; a deeper explanation of other factors - such as the correlation between workload and research productivity - would be beneficial.

There are interesting areas of overlap with other pilot research studies. For example, like Niger, this report explores the need for greater collaboration between researchers, and observes that universities in which leaders are appointed by the government are not performing as well as those in which the leaders are elected.

4.3. Dissemination and scale up

A dissemination workshop held in Ivory Coast in April 2016 was attended by 80-90 participants, including the recently appointed Minister of Higher Education and Research in Ivory Coast. She requested that CAPEC provide a set of recommendations to help inform on-going higher education reforms. The workshop also received media coverage (ID21).

A workshop in Cameroon attracted 52 participants. The research team have also had discussions with the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation about their results (ID22). The researchers plan to publish papers documenting the findings in each country and then to write a comparative paper for publication (ID21).

In Cameroon, three students are writing their master's dissertations using the data collected through this study. Following discussions during the dissemination phase, an additional student will now be writing a master's dissertation about the balance of research and teaching time (ID22). Two PhD dissertations are being written in Ivory Coast based on the data collected. This is significant in an environment where researchers struggle to access reliable data (ID21).

The lead researcher in Ivory Coast highlighted that this is first time this kind of research has been conducted in his country and that it will help to inform and advocate to both the public and private sectors: *"Now we have data, we have research results, to inform these policy makers; to say, the problem is infrastructure, the problem is access to internet, documentation, even the incentive system"* (ID21).

5. India and Bangladesh

The India and Bangladesh research project provides a valuable insight into a multi-country research study with a heavily qualitative research methodology.

5.1. Selection and methodology

The India and Bangladesh research team, from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and Unnayan Bhabna, embarked on a broad and ambitious study. Both countries are large and diverse, and India in particular has complex research structures and systems, many research institutions and significant regional diversity. The lead researchers in each team were economists.

The research teams sought to follow GDN's requirements exactly (ID9), leading to a very broad scope of research. GDN and the EA encouraged the teams to adopt a mixed method approach and provided guidance on integrating qualitative and quantitative methodologies (ID9). The EA prompted the teams to narrow down the focus of their research from the outset to make it more achievable (ID16).

5.2. Research process and peer review

The India and Bangladesh teams worked relatively independently during data collection and analysis (ID20).

In India, local research students were hired in each place where fieldwork was conducted. They received training from the research team and then participated in the data collection. In Bangladesh, the research team engaged additional staff to help with data entry and analysis

(ID9).

The teams faced delays in data collection and analysis, as well as challenges balancing teaching and research responsibilities (ID9). The timeframe was felt to be too short for the scale of the research (ID20). As in other countries, it was difficult to access reliable data, particularly in Bangladesh (ID9). Response rates to the questionnaire distributed by this team were very low (ID9). This was partially due to the length of questionnaires.

The PI felt that the critical comments provided by the EA helped give shape to the report and keep in mind GDN's expectations, as well as what was feasible given the time and funding constraints (ID20). He encouraged the teams to be realistic in their approach and to ensure comparability between the two countries. He helped them to think of practical problems that might be encountered during fieldwork. The research teams also appreciated his flexibility, and speed in replying with comments (ID9, ID20). Delays in the submission of draft and final reports made it difficult for the EA to provide detailed comments (ID16).

The teams felt that they would have benefitted from more specific and detailed feedback from GDN and their EA — particularly on the conceptual framework and the length and focus of the questionnaire — and from more country-specific guidance (ID9, ID20). They also commented that there should be more communication between the research teams and the EA (ID20).

The EA recommended that in their final write up, the authors continue to return to their conceptual framework and research questions in order to build and demonstrate a clearer argument. The EA commented that, while the research and writing process was challenging at points, the final report raises many of the major issues relating to doing research in India and Bangladesh and makes a worthwhile contribution to the debate (ID16).

The methodology workshop was valued as an opportunity to discuss research methodologies with experts, as well interact with their EA. The peer review workshop was felt to be less helpful because the approaches taken by the different teams were so different (ID20).

5.3. Dissemination and scale up

Roundtable events were held in both India and Bangladesh. The discussions were attended by research administrators from universities and think tanks, teaching faculty, researchers and students from different disciplinary and institutional backgrounds. In India, the roundtable lasted for two days, with 40 to 50 people present (ID25). The report was also presented at a national level seminar on social science research and policy implications in Bangalore (ID20).

The teams plan to publish their research, including a comparative study between India and Bangladesh, in academic and popular journals. They hope to bring out an edited volume incorporating perspectives from experts on the research environment in their institutions alongside the research report. They also intend to share the report with major regulatory and funding agencies such as the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), as well as selected think tanks (ID20).

Participation in the project, as well as input from the EA and the workshops, helped the PI develop his ability to conduct a study at such a large scale. It also deepened his understanding of mixed method research and skills in qualitative analysis (ID20).

The research teams would have appreciated greater flexibility in moving money between budget lines (ID9, ID20). The funding was also felt to be inadequate for the scope of the study, particularly in Bangladesh (ID9, ID20).

6. Peru, Paraguay and Bolivia

The South American research study is an example of a multidisciplinary team that used a

heavily qualitative methodology and was able to achieve strong research outputs.

6.1. Selection and methodology

The Latin American study was a collaboration between Group for the Analysis of Development (GRADE) in Peru, Fundación ARU in Bolivia, and the Center of Analysis and Dissemination of the Paraguayan Economy (CADEP) in Paraguay. The study benefited from a strongly interdisciplinary team. All three institutions have experience of conducting research related to knowledge production and the research environment.

A subject of discussion at the inception workshop was that the development of quantitative indicators would be limited in many countries by the lack of available data, and that many of the indicators initially proposed were better suited to more developed research environments. The workshop encouraged the research team to move their focus away from collecting data for indicators and towards a more explorative focus on understanding the processes of research production and use in their respective countries (ID7).

The team developed a common thematic protocol to enable them to explore the most relevant issues affecting the research environment in their respective contexts, and to facilitate comparison between countries. The development of the protocol was a highly iterative process between the researchers in each country, taking around two and a half months to finalise (ID7). This is the only team that did not conduct a quantitative survey, relying instead on in-depth interviews, as well as a review of relevant documents, laws and quantitative data.

6.2. Research and peer review

All three country case studies were conducted under the common thematic protocol. One factor identified as particularly effective was that researchers from all three countries met in Peru to work collaboratively on the research synthesis (ID7).

This study benefitted from a strong and productive relationship between the research team and their EA, Hebe Vessuri. Vessuri has a good knowledge of the regional context and the subject matter and provided detailed and stimulating feedback. Although contact was not frequent, Vessuri provided comprehensive written comments at key stages (ID24).

Vessuri played an important role in providing 'challenging feedback' and questioning the team's assumptions (ID7). She helped to explore the main trends of doing research across the three countries in a comparative manner and the contradictions in approaches to doing research in the region (Fernando Masi, online survey). The team felt that their advisor was more invested in the project than they had anticipated and compared favourably with advisors that they have worked with in the past. The mentoring could have been improved by more frequent meetings to discuss the research findings and more support to promote the paper in the dissemination phase.

The involvement of their EA, GDN and participants at workshops facilitated a good balance of support and guidance in terms of conceptual development, academic feedback, and policy relevance. The researchers valued being able to interact with new people at each stage, through the different external partners present at each of the workshops. As well as facilitating new feedback on the research, this had the added benefit of forming new connections for the researchers, making this an 'enriching process in terms of the networks one can build' (ID24). The process would have been improved had more members of the research team been able to participate in the workshops (ID24).

The study followed GDN's recommendation to use bibliometric indicators such as SCOPUS and Google Scholar. However, these indicators do not take into account many papers in Spanish and other languages. This is a point on which the research methodology needs to be tailored to

the Latin American context.

This research report resents a comprehensive, balanced and rich contribution. Its findings have significant interesting overlap with other studies. For example, it uses similar concepts of supply and demand to the Cambodia research. As in Niger and Cambodia, it finds issues associated with international donors significantly driving research demand. It also identifies similar issues to South Africa on funding restrictions for blue-sky academic social science research. This study was identified as being the most useful for the synthesis and scale-up, particularly because of their achievement in producing a comparative study (ID18).

6.3. Dissemination and scale up

This study has been disseminated at two international events, with presentations focusing on the comparative aspects of the study. Findings have also been disseminated at national events. GDN provided advice on new forms of dissemination, including blogs, online discussions, and videos. According to the PI, this has influenced her way of seeing how her research can be disseminated beyond this project (ID24).

One challenge in this research process was that the funding was insufficient for the scope of the research and the amount of work undertaken, meaning that the researchers had to work partially underfunded (ID24). This has limited the amount of dissemination undertaken by the research team. GDN's support for the dissemination phase could have been improved by financing presentations of the study at regional research meetings in Latin America and by providing funds to expand the research in order to be eligible for publication in journals (Online survey, Fernando Masi). Future work is dependent upon funding opportunities.

Synthesis

This chapter provides a synthesis of the case study findings and our review of the research reports. It is structured according to the OECD-DAC criteria for measuring development assistance: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

7. Relevance

7.1. Overview

This section explores the relevance of the *Doing Research* project for the participating researchers, institutions and country contexts. It reports that participants believe the research topic is important and valued the flexibility they were given to explore the issues most relevant to their individual contexts.

7.2. Relevance to participating researchers and institutions

All participating research teams said that they valued the *Doing Research* project for its relevance and originality. They perceived the social science research environment to be important topic of study in their contexts. For example, researchers from the Niger, Cambodia and Indonesia stated that the social science research environment is a topic of discussion in their respective countries, but that it is characterised by anecdotal information and a lack of systematic exploration (ID13, ID15, ID17). For example:

> *"…we finally have real empirical evidence about the on-going state of research in Indonesia, because prior to this study there have been only anecdotal notes or claims. These are mostly ideological debates but without any real empirical proof." (Fajri*

Siregar, Indonesia team, ID4)

All respondents to the online survey also agreed (four) or strongly agreed (three) that their university or institution believes that the research is important. The value placed on the research by participating institutions is also indicated by the fact that three teams contributed their own resources to the research studies (ID2, ID7, ID23).

A notable strength of the *Doing Research* project is the level of contextualisation of the research outputs. The flexibility afforded to each research team in the development of their methodologies and conceptual frameworks enabled them to draw heavily on their knowledge of the social science research environment, and to explore the factors they perceive to be most relevant in their context. All respondents to the online survey agreed (two) or strongly agreed (five) that their research is original.

The social science research environment has been critically examined in many developed contexts. There are also individual research studies that explore the social science environment in specific developing countries. Four of the seven respondents to the online survey strongly agreed and one agreed that *Doing Research* is a unique project in their country. One respondent disagreed and one strongly disagreed. However while individual social science environments have been explored, there is no evidence in the literature that the environment has been systematically explored across multiple developing and transitional countries.

8. Effectiveness

8.1. Overview

This section investigates the effectiveness of the *Doing Research* project. It assesses the factors contributing to quality research outputs and analyses the effectiveness of interdisciplinary research teams.

The effectiveness of research outputs are analysed according to seven quality criteria. The criteria draw on the stated objectives of the *Doing Research* project as well as the work of Guba and Lincoln (1981) on assessing the quality of qualitative research. The reader should note that this is not an exhaustive review of the individual research reports. Instead, the analysis is intended to inform the evaluation of the global programme and the extent to which the research outputs met the requirements of the programme.

8.2. Research outputs

Perceptions of the quality of research outputs varied significantly between participants and EAs. Overall, the research teams were satisfied with the reports that were produced. Three respondents to the online survey assessed the quality of their final research report as 'very good', two as 'good' and two as 'average'. By comparison, four of the research outputs were reported by EAs as not having met their expectations; one output - from the Indonesian team - did meet expectations.

The disciplinary diversity of the research teams had a significant impact on the approach taken and quality of the research outputs. Respondents to the online survey agreed (six) or strongly agreed (one) that their report incorporates interdisciplinary perspectives. When asked to list the disciplines that have informed their work, online survey respondents listed an average (median) of three disciplines. Economics was mentioned most frequently (six respondents), followed by sociology (four) and political science (four), and then history (two) and psychology (two).

The findings of this evaluation indicate that teams lacking disciplinary diversity faced additional challenges in production of their research studies. These challenges were set in motion at the selection phase: mentors often tried to encourage multi-disciplinary perspectives later in the research process, but struggled to do so for teams that were all from similar research disciplines. These teams experienced challenges in collecting data that was sufficiently broad in coverage and scope and in identifying relevant contextual information from outside their own disciplinary perspective.

The extent to which the research outputs actually reflect multidisciplinary perspectives is primarily predicated upon the disciplinary diversity of the research teams at the outset of the project. Research teams that were heavily dominated by economists, such as the India, Cameroon and Ivory Coast teams, failed to incorporate interdisciplinary perspectives or to adopt a mixed method approach.

8.3. Conceptual framing and originality

Overall, the research reports scored 'strong' for the 'conceptual framing and originality' criteria. All of the research acknowledged existing relevant research. In particular, the majority of studies drew heavily on the historical framework of their countries research environment. For example, Indonesia, South Africa and Cambodia all explored historical factors to describe how national political changes and the global research agenda impacted social science research. However, the Niger study was the only research study to use a dominant historical approach. The team explored how current reforms are coloured by experiences during the 1990s political crisis and looked at the impact of reform processes between 2000 and today. Both GDN and EAs provided significant support to teams to ensure relevant work was used and referenced.

The amount of structure provided in the conceptual framing of the analysis was more varied. The Indonesia report is an excellent example of a well-structured research study. The team constructed a three-tier framework that distinguished between macro, meso and micro factors to structure the analysis. The authors presented a systematic argument of how past and present policy has impacted social science research. By contrast, the Niger study provided limited detail of the conceptual framework underpinning their analysis. However, this may be because methodological detail is sometimes lacking in the truncated published papers.

The research reports all contained elements of originality. For example, the Cambodia report was highly original in its broad perspective of knowledge production and the many places from which social science research can arise. South Africa also provided a novel paper that critically analyses *why* it is important that social science research is underfunded and that demonstrates persistent racial and gender biases in the research environment.

8.4. Appropriateness and completeness

The second criterion considered the appropriateness of methods and the completeness of the research. The majority of research reports scored 'moderate' against this criterion. The majority of studies used a mixed methods approach that combined document reviews, in-depth qualitative interviews, and surveys. Two of the teams - Peru, Bolivia and Paraguay, and South Africa - collected additional data through bibliographic data mining. Bibliographic analysis provided quantitative triangulation of the data and valuable additional insights, although it tended not to include all relevant work in languages other than English. Some of the teams also attempted to construct an institution mapping, although the depth and breadth of this mapping varied significantly between teams.

A weakness of the methodologies was the clustering of responses within regions and institutions: it was therefore often difficult for teams to achieve a representative sample of

research participants. The issue was most acute in large countries with diverse research institutions such as India. The small number of surveys completed across different institutions in India and Bangladesh make it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions underpinned by statistical analysis. Moreover, it was sometimes difficult to access particular subsets of research subjects. For example, the Cambodia and Niger teams both reported challenges in accessing female researchers.

Overall, the Doing Research pilot presents a large volume of data. However, the breadth of the research questions meant it was difficult to achieve completeness. For example, in Indonesia and Cambodia, the data explores the breadth of knowledge creation in the country. However, Cambodia gave greater relative importance to research produced the NGO sector. Other studies, such as Niger, Cameroon and Ivory Coast, and South Africa, focussed heavily on universities and failed to incorporate information on other knowledge producers such as think tanks or NGOs. The Niger research highlights the blurring of lines blurring of lines between consultancy and academia – with the same researchers involved in both sectors.

The Indonesia study is notable for its depth of data on public universities and it manages to provide interesting comparative data from different institutions. This makes it possible to compare research sectors, although the authors do not account for differences between geographies or for the differences in the quality of university facilities. By contrast, the Peru, Paraguay and Bolivia research team opted for a wide breadth of participants, trying to cover the diversity of institutions found across the three countries. The different methodologies offer different insights into institutional variety within the study geography, but limit comparison of institutional variety between countries.

The Niger and Cambodia research explored both research production and research demand. For example, the Niger study outlines limitations in research dissemination in the country and argues that there is a low demand for quality social science studies. However, in general, research teams do not adequately assess research policy and use. Some studies, such as South Africa, provide detailed analysis on the production of academic publications and book chapters but do not extend this to uptake and use. There is relatively little primary data collected from research users – for example South Africa include only four interviews with policy makers. There are therefore limited findings on how demand for research emerges.

The research reports provide valuable and rich qualitative information. However there is a limited extent to which they provide measurable and comparable indicators. The Cameroon and Ivory Coast study provides some quantitative indicators of supply and demand, but lacks qualitative data to explain the nuances of participant's perspectives. By contrast, the Niger study presents interesting primary data but it is very contextualised and therefore it is challenging to draw out indicators that can be used to describe the research environment in general.

8.5. Validity and credibility

The research reports all scored 'weak' or 'moderate' on the criterion for 'Demonstrating measurement validity'. This criterion attempts to assess the credibility, or believability, of findings from the perspective of participants. Validity requires that there is opportunity for feedback from participants or other researchers, and that their opinions are fed back into the research to verify findings.

The majority of published research reports did not describe a detailed methodology. There was no discussion of ethical approval processes, with the exception of the South Africa team, who received ethical approval from their Human and Social Sciences ethics committee.

The majority of studies did not describe a stage for validating research findings with participants. However, Five respondents said that they had involved research participants,

such as other academics, university management, policy makers or other research users, in reviewing the findings of the research. Cambodia is a notable example: the research methodology drew on social science students to gather data, and these researchers were also involved in validating findings. Roundtables and informal meetings were held to gather feedback from research participants and to review the research findings.

8.6. Corroboration

Overall, it would be difficult for other research teams to confirm or corroborate the findings presented in the *Doing Research* studies. This is primarily because most studies include only a brief description of the research methodology and it would therefore be difficult to replicate the studies. However, the longer papers (produced by Cambodia and South Africa) do provide detail of the methodology, interview subjects, and their profiles and demographics. These papers give information on the sampling approach that would be sufficient for another researcher to replicate the data collection.

Secondly, the limited number of respondents per institution and location means the outcomes of the data analysis cannot be extrapolated. In most cases, it is therefore not possible to provide summary indicators of the research environment that are statistically robust.

Finally, most studies attempted to ensure that the profiles of participants included a representative sample of people from different constituencies. However, there was no discussion of how researcher biases or subjectivity might have influenced the findings in any of the reports.

8.7. Dependability and cultural sensitivity

Respondents to the online survey strongly agreed (six) or agreed (1) that the research findings are context specific. There is a strong understanding of cultural context and how this is changing. For example, in the studies from Peru, Bolivia and Paraguay, recent history is explored to understand the lack of internal collaboration between different institutions in the country.

In Cambodia, there is some discussion of historical context of the Khmer Rouge and the sensitivities arising from current changes in the country. There is a strong emphasis on the generational gap between older researchers who are pessimistic about the role of research in society, and younger researchers who respond optimistically to the potential of research for social benefit.

The authors of the South Africa report provide a detailed review of the literature and attempt to understand how the social science context has changed between 1966 and today. The Niger report also explores success and limitations of reforms that have taken place since 2000 how they have impacted the research environment.

The weakest study under this criterion was Cameroon and Ivory Coast. The study was lacking in qualitative data that could provide an explanation of the context and macro level changes in the country.

8.8. Transferability

The final criterion was Transferability, which assesses the extent to which findings can be generalised to other settings. The Transferability score was highest for papers that provided a detailed cultural context, which provides other researchers with a good understanding of how the methods and findings might be relevant to their own contexts. South Africa and Cambodia, for example provided a detailed description of the data and its historical context.

Overall, the studies are highly contextualised and qualitative, and they do not contribute many easily measurable or comparable indicators. In part, this is due to the complex nature of the research environment. For example, the Niger study provides rich data that explores the supply-demand dynamics that shape research institutions. However, it is difficult to assess how easily these are generalizable to other fragile contexts (ref Synthesis report).

The multi-country studies provide useful insight into the challenges for generalising the research indicators. For example, the India and Bangladesh study used a shared research methodology. However, the authors found it difficult to draw out patterns, commonalities or a common structure between the two studies (ref Synthesis report). Overall all of the studies are highly descriptive and do not succeed in presenting the analysis in a way that easily leads to measurable indicators.

9. Efficiency

This section assesses the efficiency of the *Doing Research* project. It considers the quality and utility of the inputs and activities, including workshops, external advisors, and GDN support.

9.1. Workshops

Two workshops organised by GDN facilitated face-to-face contact between all research teams, EAs and the GDN team. Workshops were highly valued by all research team members as an opportunity for professional networking, personal interaction with their EA and to set their research in a global perspective.

The workshops provided a platform for cross-team learning and peer review. Four respondents to the online survey agreed or strongly agreed that their work had benefitted from ideas shared by other research teams; though three teams disagreed with this statement. The South Africa team felt there were not enough opportunities for communication and engagement with other teams (ID23).

Three respondents to the online survey rated the usefulness of the Inception Workshop as 'very good' and three rated it as 'good' (one respondent did not attend). Respondents were somewhat less positive about the usefulness of the Global Peer Review Workshop: one rated it as 'very good', three rated it as 'good' and one as 'average'. Two said that the comparison between countries was the most helpful part of the peer review workshop. One valued the diversity of methodological approaches to the same issue, and another learned about the importance of the qualitative analysis.

The Cambodia, Indonesia and Cameroon teams identified the workshops as being the aspect of support from GDN that had the most significant influence on their research. For Benjamin Fomba, from Cameroon, this was because many questions were posed about the index and about qualitative aspects of research, which helped to improve the quality of the publications (ID22). The PI of the Indonesian research team identified the workshop in Johannesburg as having had the most significant influence on their research, because of the opportunity to gather input on the design of their research from peers and their EA at an early stage (ID13). The PI of the India/ Bangladesh team also felt that the workshop in Johannesburg gave the opportunity to gain input from experts on their methodology (ID20). The workshop in New Delhi was felt to be less helpful because the approaches followed by each team were so different. One team felt the workshop had provided a valuable opportunity to receive feedback from researchers involved in other studies (ID21).

Such activities are resource-intensive, both in terms of the funding commitment required from GDN, and the time commitment required from busy researchers and EAs. This is particularly significant where long-distance flights were required. Participants commented that the

workshops would have benefitted from being slightly longer (ID14, ID16, ID19), and from including more members of the research teams (ID13, ID24).

9.2. External advising

There was significant variation in the efficiency of mentoring relationships. Table 1 indicates researcher's perspectives on mentoring.

	Very poor	Quite poor	Average	Quite good	Very good
The frequency of mentoring during the research phase	0	0	3 (43%)	3 (43%)	1 (14%)
The quality of mentoring during the research phase	0	1 (14%)	1 (14%)	4 (57%)	1 (14%)
The frequency of mentoring during the research review phase	0	1 (14%)	2 (29%)	3 (43%)	1 (14%)
The quality of mentoring during the research review phase	0	0	2 (29%)	4 (57%)	1 (14%)

Table 1: Perceptions of mentoring amongst online survey respondents

The **frequency** of mentoring during the **research phase** was rated as average by three respondents. Three rated the frequency as quite good, and one as very good. Three respondents rated the **frequency** of mentoring during the **research review phase** as quite good; one rated it as very good, one as average and one as quite poor.

Communication between mentors and mentees generally took place at workshops and at key points in the research process, including the development of the methodology, the submission of the draft and final reports. However, the frequency of additional inputs varied significantly between EAs. Teams were in email contact and had Skype calls with advisors, and advisors provided comments and tracked changes on written drafts. Benjamin Buclet, the EA for the Niger team, reflected that it had been helpful to schedule a fortnightly Skype meeting to ensure regular communication (ID18). The meetings lasted for 20-30 minutes, after which he wrote a short email report to GDN and the team.

Face to face contact was identified as important to the success of the mentoring relationship, particularly when infrastructural challenges limited distance-based communication between research teams and EAs (ID14, ID18, ID21, ID23). This was a challenge when EAs or research team members were not able to be present at workshops. Some respondents noted that Skype communication had been more effective once an in-person meeting had taken place (ID14, ID18).

The relationship between EAs and research teams was defined very flexibly. Three out of four advisors felt that the roles and responsibilities for the advisor and research team were sufficiently clear from the outset (ID14, ID16, ID19). One argued that it was better that roles were not clearly defined, because relationships between advisors and teams are always different. The ambiguity allows advisors space to 'learn by doing'; to adjust and understand how they could be most useful (ID18).

GDN were seen to be responsive to and supportive of EAs (ID14, ID19). However, Benjamin Buclet noted that it would have been useful for mentors to meet as a group and share experiences at the beginning of the project, and that some written guidance on how to be a

good mentor might be beneficial in future (ID18).

Four out of seven respondents rated the **quality** of the mentoring during the **research phase** as quite good; one as very good, one as average and one as quite poor. The **quality** of the mentoring during the **review phase** was rated as 'quite good' by four respondents, as 'average' by two respondents, and as 'very good' by one.

EAs gave significant input at the methodology phase, helping to clarify research questions, goals and hypotheses (ID16, ID18), supporting in the development of questionnaires (ID13, ID16, ID19), and encouraging a mixed method approach (ID2, ID14, ID16). Nonetheless, teams had already developed a methodological approach and conceptual framework by this stage, and the extent to which the workshop or the advice from EAs could influence the methodologies was limited.

The mentoring relationship had a moderate impact on the interdisciplinary nature of the research. Three respondents agreed and one strongly agreed with the statement, 'our mentor encouraged us to consider interdisciplinary perspectives'. Three neither agreed nor disagreed. When asked whether GDN had encouraged them to consider interdisciplinary perspectives, two agreed, one disagreed, and three neither agreed nor disagreed, and one answered 'I don't know'.

The Indonesian research team felt that they were well matched with their mentor, and that his background complemented the areas in which they were weakest. The two lead researchers are based in research centres with a focus on qualitative research. They appreciated their EA's input in establishing the indicators for their survey. He provided key readings in which concepts had already been broken down into indicators. They also benefited from his background in public management of higher education (ID13). They took on board their EA's advice to narrow down their objectives, and to concentrate on a few universities and a few specific issues (ID16).

In the cases of the Niger and Latin American teams, the EAs were particularly valued as an external perspective, helping to challenge assumptions derived from being so immersed in a particular research environment (ID17, ID18, ID24).

Online survey respondents were asked how support from their mentor could be improved. Responses included:

- Increased support with dissemination (two respondents)
- Better understanding of the country context (two respondents)
- More communication and meetings (one respondent)
- Support with journal writing (one respondent)
- Mentor should be in the same academic discipline as the PI (one respondent).

9.3. Support from GDN

Support provided by GDN more broadly was generally viewed positively. Four respondents to the online survey said that the support provided by GDN programme staff was 'quite good'. One felt that it was 'very good', one 'average', and one 'very poor'. Professor Meek highlighted that GDN staff played an important role in working with the teams, trying to keep them on track with deadlines, keeping the mentors informed and supporting overall coordination (ID16). The Indonesian PI specifically noted that the proof-reader provided by GDN was very competent and helped to increase the quality of the report (ID13).

For the South Africa team, the guidance provided by GDN was the most effective aspect of support. GDN's engagement with and comments on their report were felt to be robust and insightful (ID23). Ramona's role in sending reminders, ensuring the team were up to date and understood the processes, and keeping them on track, was appreciated. They also appreciated

that GDN were presented at an event organised by one of the members of the South Africa research team, the World Social Sciences Forum, noting, *"in all my time as an academic in the higher education sector, I hadn't had a space where a funder actually came and was there and engaged and presented with us"* (ID23).

The Latin American research team appreciated having the space to bring in their own ideas and to consider for themselves what is possible in their environment. This was articulated by the PI:

> *"In my experience, a lot of global partners work on a low trust basis, so researchers in the global south, although we might be really qualified in terms of our credentials and experience, we are often treated like contract workers. Not many global partners treat us like equals. So I think GDN is quite unique in that sense that they treat you as an equal; they assume you're able to produce very good quality research. The fact that they treat you like that really ups your game."* (ID24)

9.4. Funding and resources

Four out of seven online survey respondents agreed that the amount of funding provided was appropriate to the scope of the research, though one disagreed and two strongly disagreed. The South Africa research team, which is not represented in the survey results, commented during an interview that the funding was not sufficiently flexible, and that they were limited by certain restrictions, such as the percentage of funding that could be allocated to consultancy fees. This limited the extent to which they could include research assistants and build capacity (ID19).

Three institutions have contributed some of their own money to the research process. The Cameroon and Ivory Coast, Latin America and South Africa research teams had to use their own resources to achieve the quality of the research that they desired; in the case of South Africa by funding a bibliometric analysis from their own research funds (ID23), and in the case of Latin America with researchers working partially underfunded (ID24). The South Africa team also felt that the scope of the research had not been sufficiently clear from the outset and that there were issues with 'project creep' (ID23). They also felt that the methodology, intent and purpose of the study continued to shift during the project (ID23).

The variation in the ease of doing research between different countries also affects the successes and limitations of the different studies. Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Niger and South Africa all experienced strikes during the research phase, disrupting the data collection process. Other geographical factors - such as the onset of the rainy season in Ivory Coast and Cameroon - also affected the research. The time requirements and cost of doing research varies widely in different countries, and is affected by factors such as the distance between institutions and the quality of the road network, and the expectations of research participants (such as for per diems) (ID2, ID8).

GDN found that it was more challenging than expected to get teams to complete work on team. Most research teams required extensions, which were granted by GDN (ID25). The Niger, Indonesia, Cambodia, and Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru reports were the first to be made available.

10. Impact

This section explores the impact of the *Doing Research* project. It assesses the extent to which the project achieved its stated objectives, and helped to build the skills and capacity of participating researchers.

10.1. Research objectives

The *Doing Research* pilot set out to define measurable indicators that would give a comprehensive picture of the social science research environment in developing and transitional countries. The pilot achieved seven research reports that address this question from different disciplinary perspectives. Significant work is still required to produce a comprehensive set of indicators. Nevertheless, the work so far represents a rich set of primary data. It was noted that GDN's role in publishing the papers was beneficial, providing 'proof of quality' (ID18).

The South Africa research team felt that the project ended up feeling disjointed, with little conversation between the different research teams. They recommend that GDN secure a special issue with a reputable journal, through which the teams can tell their stories and experiences, with one or two articles that reflect on the differences and commonalities (ID23).

The Cambodia, Latin America, Indonesia and Niger research teams have all written accessible blogs, hosted on the Research to Action website.[4] They were encouraged and supported to do so by the GDN team (ID25). The PI of the Latin American team felt this helped develop her skills in research dissemination (ID24). The PI of the Indonesian team commented that more blog posts would be beneficial, and suggested encouraging PIs to write a reflective note after each workshop and after the writing of the final report (ID13). On the other hand, the South Africa team felt that the idea of writing a blog was a distraction and that the focus should be on more academic outputs (ID23).

It is notable that in response to an open question about how GDN's support for the dissemination phase could have been improved, five out of seven respondents mentioned increased funding or flexibility of funding. Specifically, funding was requested to finance presentations of the study at regional research meetings, to expand the research to be eligible for publication in journals, to facilitate the organisation of more seminars and workshops, and to print GDN promotional materials and seminar kits. One respondent request more french-language documentation on the project.

10.2. Research dissemination

One of the three objectives of the *Doing Research* project was to expose important shortcomings and barriers to research, and to share these with the relevant stakeholders.

The research produced interesting findings that are relevant to research administrators and policy makers. For example, the South Africa team concluded that the limiting factor in terms of the state of social science research in South Africa is not funding and resources; it is about who can access information and has the skills required to write grant proposals. The team feel that this changes the way people should look at the challenges facing researchers and the social science community in South Africa (ID23). Professor Meek commented that the projects

> "*have increased the awareness of the importance of social science research and the vulnerability of the social sciences in the present funding climates of the different countries, but with the realisation of the potential that social science research has for robust policy making*" (ID16).

GDN and the research teams have organised webinars, blogs, and events aligned to this objective. At the time of writing, six of the seven research teams had organised local

[4] http://www.researchtoaction.org/dialogue/gdn-doing-research/

dissemination events, with the number of participants ranging from 40-50 (India) to 200 (Indonesia). GDN also organised a public seminar in New Delhi in October 2015, and a two-part webinar series in May and July 2016, hosted by Research to Action. A full list of dissemination activities, webinars, and blogs is provided in Annex 6.

The Indonesian research team collaborated with the Knowledge Sector Initiative (KSI) for an event at which three pieces of research were launched, including the Indonesian *Doing Research* study. The event was attended by around 200 people (ID13), including high-level politicians and researchers (ID16), and was opened and closed by GDN's president. The event was felt to be mutually beneficial, drawing together KSI's engagement with Indonesian stakeholders and GDN's more global presence. It was also a learning curve for the Indonesian team, who felt that had a larger dissemination been planned from the outset, they could have hired more help in the organisation of the event (ID13).

The South Africa team has produced a dissemination plan but has not yet put this into action. The Niger, Latin America and Indonesia PIs also presented their findings on a panel at GDN's annual conference in Peru (ID13). The PI of the Latin America team also presented their findings at a conference on the subject of doing research in the global south, in Paris (ID24).

Six out of seven teams have engaged with senior research administrators, such as faculty deans, rectors, or think tank directors, through the dissemination activities. One respondent said that their team had engaged with over 20 senior research administrators. Three teams had engaged with 1-5 senior research administrators, one with six-10, and one with 16-20. One respondent strongly agreed and two agreed with the statement, 'senior research administrators have expressed support of the research recommendations'. Three neither agreed nor disagreed and one strongly disagreed.

Six out of seven online survey respondents said that they have engaged with senior policy makers in charge of the research policy through their dissemination activities. Two had engaged with between one and five senior policy makers; one with six-10, one with 11-15 and two with 16-20. One respondent had not yet engaged with any senior policy makers. One respondent strongly agreed, and two agreed, with the statement, 'senior policy makers have expressed support of the research recommendations'. Three neither agreed nor disagreed and one strongly disagreed.

Ivory Coast was able to achieve good engagement with policy makers due to two main factors. Firstly, CAPEC is a well-established think tank working closely with the government (ID21). Secondly, the study was able to capitalise on a period of transition: the Minister of Higher Education, appointed in January 2016, has initiated a series of higher education reforms, and has invited CAPEC to be involved in the reform process (ID21).

The presence of representatives of GDN at events in Niger and Indonesia was appreciated (ID13, ID17). In Niger, the PI commented that the participation of a member of staff from GDN helped to underline the international value and quality of their work, and emphasised why it is important for Niger to be involved in such initiatives (ID17).

10.3. Capacity building

The evaluation process identified a number of ways in which the *Doing Research* project has helped to build the capacity of participating researchers, in ways that will enable them to deliver greater value to their institutions and research communities in future. In responses to the online survey, three participants agreed and three strongly agreed that the *Doing Research* project has increased their research skills, while one disagreed. For example:

- Three of the PIs commented that *Doing Research* has improved their project management skills, particularly in terms of managing a research project of this size (ID13, ID20, ID22), with fieldwork conducted simultaneously across multiple sites

(ID13).

- Two participants emphasised that the project has improved their ability to communicate and disseminate the findings of their research (ID13, ID24), including communicating evidence in an accessible manner, considering who findings are relevant for, writing media articles (ID13) and exploring new modes of dissemination, such as blogs and online discussions (ID24).
- Four participants (ID13, ID20, ID21, ID24) reported improvements in their research skills during interviews, including report writing (ID13); understanding mixed methodologies and how to balance quantitative and qualitative research (ID20); interview skills (ID20) and exposure to new literature (ID20, ID21).
- Three participants emphasised the benefits of the research in terms of building new connections for them and their institution (ID15, ID17, ID24), expanding their networks at a national and international level. Furthermore, Abdourahmane Idrissa noted that the *Doing Research* project improved internal collaboration and coordination for Economie Politique et Gouvernance Autonome (EPGA), the newly formed think tank leading the research (ID17).

11. Sustainability

This section examines the sustainability of the *Doing Research* project. It assesses the contribution of the pilot phase to the development of a *Doing Research* indicator, and the extent to which activities are likely to be scaled-up, by GDN and by the research teams.

11.1. Research team's future plans

The online survey included an open question about plans for further use of the research. All participants in the evaluation process expressed ideas for further activities in this area, with the caveat that many such plans are dependent upon the availability of funding. Four respondents mentioned future research on the topic; of these, two intend to develop a more detailed study about their own country, and three hope to expand the research at a regional level, including through the creation of standards or indicators. Two intend to utilise and develop the research for teaching and mentoring purposes. Two mentioned journal publication. The South Africa research team also commented in interview that they are planning to publish the work, and are aiming for at least eight different articles or chapters on different themes (ID23). Researchers in Cameroon and Ivory Coast have built up a database through the project, which they plan to use for future research activities and papers (ID21).

Two interview participants spoke explicitly about wanting to find ways to improve their research environment (ID15, ID24). The majority of respondents to the online survey agreed (two) or strongly agreed (four) that the research will help their University or institution to advocate for a better social science research environment; the final respondent neither agreed nor disagreed. The PI of the Latin American team noted,

> *"This project has made me reflect and become very clear about that: you can't just act as if you're a researcher, because the context is so weak you have to be a researcher at the same time as you push your context forward to be more nourishing, healthy, to enable you to do your work in a better way"* (ID24).

The Indonesian research team plan to rewrite their report into a journal article, with support from the KSI in the form of mentorship from their partner, the Australian National University (ANU). They will continue engaging with policy makers through the KSI working groups and integrate the findings into teaching materials (Inaya Rakhmani, online survey).

11.2. Contribution to synthesis and scale-up

The design of the project incorporated a trade-off between comparability and flexibility. GDN did not impose a consistent methodology across the teams, and each team adopted a different approach to researching the research environment. This limited comparability of findings across countries and made the synthesis process more challenging. Two EAs noted that if the process were to be repeated, it would be better for teams to follow the same methodologies (ID18, ID19). The South Africa team also felt that the greatest value of the project - that it was going to be an examination of social sciences in different countries in a way that would permit comparative analysis - was eroded, because common indicators, questions and approaches were never agreed (ID23).

However, this approach allowed a broad range of methodologies to emerge, facilitating a rich and diverse set of studies, with significant learning for the scale-up. For example, the flexibility afforded to the research teams enabled the Latin American researchers to develop a comparative and exploratory methodology, including the common protocol, which, in turn, proved to be effective in identifying and understanding the factors affecting the social science research environment and in facilitating cross-cutting analysis. The methodology adopted by this team was valuable in terms of lessons learned for the synthesis, demonstrating that with a very qualitative approach it is possible to produce very good research, which is truly comparative (ID25).

The country case studies have demonstrated the extent to which additional data is required to capture and assess the quality of the social science research environment in development countries; and the need for additional funding to collect that data (ID25).

The *Doing Research* has now moved into its second phase, focusing on the synthesis of the results of each of the case studies and the development of a framework to measure the research environment across countries. A draft synthesis report has been prepared, bringing together the findings and learning from each of the case studies and beginning to develop an assessment tool.

Benjamin Buclet, who GDN contracted to prepare the synthesis report, drew heavily on the findings of each of the seven studies. The Latin American study was identified as having been most relevant to the overall objectives of the project and to the scale up, because they were most successful in developing a comparative approach (ID18). The Indonesian study was also identified as being particularly strong in terms of methodology. Studies of larger countries, particularly India, were less easy to utilise for the synthesis, particularly given the diversity of regions and institutions (ID18).

A Pilot Synthesis and Scale Up Workshop was held in the UK in May 2016. This workshop was based on the synthesis document, and the discussions at the workshop and the development of an overarching comparative framework drew on the findings of the pilot phase (ID25).

María Balarin observed that significant changes and learning have taken place between the methodology workshop in Johannesburg in January 2015, at which GDN proposed a model similar to that of the World Bank's Doing Business index, and suggested a set of indicators, and the synthesis workshop in Brighton in May 2016. *"Something very clear in Brighton is that… we need common indicators but we also have to provide a lot of very explicit space for contextual elements to come up"* (ID24). Quantitative indicators could be set in the context of two or three page reports, bringing up the more qualitative elements of how research is produced, including the barriers and facilitators of research in different contexts (ID24).

The pilot phase has enabled GDN to develop a community of stakeholders with interest in the scale-up of the project (ID25). The synthesis workshop was attended by new stakeholders who had not participated in the pilot phase, including representatives of the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), the Department for International Development (DfID) and IDRC.

Joseph Hoffman noted that, *"the greatest strength of the project is that it is driven by a very interesting problem, which is: is there a more systematic and sustainable way to monitor the policy oriented research environment on a comparative basis, so that it is possible to see the trends and to know, what doing research looks like in country A compared to country B. And I think that has been a big contribution"* (ID19).

12. Conclusions

This evaluation has used a mixed methods approach to assess the extent to which the *Doing Research* pilot project achieved its objectives. It employed process-oriented case studies to explore the experiences of research teams, a review of the quality of research outputs, an online survey and a series of in-depth qualitative interviews.

The *Doing Research* project enabled all teams to carry out a piece of research that they see as original, relevant and valuable in their context. The research was strongly contextualised and PIs were given the flexibility to explore the factors that they believed are most important in determining the social science research environment in their geography.

GDN provided a range of inputs including funding, workshops, team EAs, and general support. GDN was identified as comparing favourably to other donors in a number of areas, including the flexibility and trust afforded to researchers, the level of personalised support, and the quality of academic input on research provided by EAs and at workshops.

In general, the amount of funding provided was insufficient relative to the scope of the task. A passion for the research topic and a desire to produce good outputs led many to partially fund the research themselves or to work underfunded.

The broad scope of the objectives also meant that it was difficult to respond to all the research questions. For example, in Indonesia and Cambodia, the data explores the breadth of knowledge creation in the country. Other studies, such as Niger, Cameroon and Ivory Coast, and South Africa, focussed heavily on universities and failed to incorporate information on other knowledge producers such as think tanks or NGOs. By contrast, the Peru, Paraguay and Bolivia research team opted for a wide breadth of participants, trying to cover the diversity of institutions found across the three countries. The different methodologies offer different insights into institutional variety within the study geography, but limit comparison between countries. There are also limited findings on how demand for research emerges.

The Doing Research project had a broad set of research questions and invited applications from teams representing a wide range of disciplinary perspectives and proposed methodological approaches. This allowed teams to choose their preferred area of research and to produce highly contextualised research studies. However, the approach also made comparison between the research studies difficult. This challenge arose even when a single team conducted the study in multiple countries (for example, India and Bangladesh). It is not possible to establish whether a more constrained research design would have allowed equally rich data to be collected. Nevertheless, the evaluation findings suggest that the breadth of the studies will facilitate a better understanding of the complex factors that influence the social science research environment. Moreover, the research teams were very positive about their own learning and findings. However, the diversity of papers produced at the pilot stage suggests that some of the country studies will need to be repeated to creating a comprehensive index with comparable data sets.

Interdisciplinary research teams were better placed to develop a holistic understanding of the social science research environment. The inclusion of interdisciplinary perspectives was largely dependent upon the make up of the teams at the outset. It would therefore be beneficial to place greater emphasis on interdisciplinary teams in the selection process. Many of the weaknesses in the final outputs - such as an overemphasis on quantitative research - were

identified as risks at the selection phase.

Two workshops organised by GDN facilitated face-to-face contact between all research teams, EAs and the GDN team. Workshops could be improved by extending their length to three days, and by including a higher number of team members, where funds are available. There was limited interaction between different teams or between EAs outside of the workshops.

The role of EAs varied considerably between teams. The contribution of EAs to the research process was generally valued, particularly where EAs were experts in the subject matter and had an understanding of the context. Face-to-face contact was highly valued by both EAs and research team members.

The quality of research dissemination and policy linkages has been variable. It has been strongest where partnerships were formed, as in the case of the Indonesian team, and where existing links to policy makers could be leveraged, as in Cameroon and Ivory Coast. It could be enhanced with greater funding and tailored support from GDN and EAs in the dissemination process.

The expansion of researchers' networks, both nationally through the data collection process and dissemination activities, and internationally through workshops, represents a significant strength of the project and was valued by many of the research teams.

13. Recommendations

13.1. Recommendations for GDN

The following recommendations are applicable both to the scale up of the Doing Research project, and to GDN's wider research capacity building activities.

Mentoring

The level of non-financial support from GDN was found to compare favourably to that given by other research donors. Nevertheless, there are opportunities to enhance support to teams by developing the EA role.

- Seek to pair teams with mentors that have strong contextual knowledge.
- Facilitate connections between teams and multiple advisors with different areas of expertise. Researchers would benefit from the opportunity to access range of specific expertise beyond the mentoring relationship, for example, through shorter-term connections to advisors with a certain disciplinary background or area of expertise, as required during the research process. This could primarily happen through workshops, but also by connecting researchers directly to relevant advisors on specific topics.
- Extend the mentoring role to include increased support during the dissemination phase, including in the production of academic articles.
- Provide further guidance to mentors at the outset, including on the roles and expectations of the mentor-mentee relationship (whilst acknowledging the importance of flexibility in responding to specific teams' needs. This could also include facilitating contact between mentors throughout the research process.

Workshops

Workshops provided a unique opportunity for PIs to network, review and discuss research methodologies and findings. There are opportunities to extend these benefits to whole research teams.

- Researchers at all stages in their careers appreciate the opportunity for networking with other scholars. This could be encouraged through workshops and participation in GDN's annual conference. Regional meetings represent an opportunity for additional interaction at a lower cost.
- Consider sourcing funding to enable more members of research teams to participate in workshops; or bringing researchers together for fewer, longer sessions at which more members can participate.
- Explore digital platforms that can facilitate greater collaboration and discussion between research teams outside in-person workshops.
- Consider elongating workshops by one day to enable the inclusion of additional time for group discussions, and additional meetings between teams and their mentors.
- Provide increased flexibility to mentors and grantees to select the most convenient flights for travel to workshops.

Doing Research scale-up

The pilot study evaluation has identified lessons on the selection and make-up of research teams that can be applied to the scale-up phase of the research.

- A greater emphasis should be placed on multidisciplinary research teams at the call for proposals and selection stages. This is crucial if the Doing Research project is to facilitate a broad and inclusive study of the social science research environment.
- Seek PIs that are not overcommitted and that can be reasonably invested and involved throughout the research process. Include a minimum number of days of involvement of the PI in the contract.
- Seek opportunities to integrate capacity building of younger researchers into the collection of data for the framework; for example, prioritising projects that include a component for training and mentoring of younger researchers.
- Recruit multidisciplinary teams with a willingness to conduct specific research that fits within the confines of the framework. Ensure that terms of reference for researchers participating in the scale up clearly outline expectations for the methodology to be adopted, in order to ensure a consistent approach across teams.
- Seek input on how to ensure the framework indicators are transferable and relevant in different regions, for example, ensuring bibliometric indicators account for papers published in different languages.
- Ensure that the framework has space for contextualisation, for example, by ensuring that it is accompanied by significant narrative explanation of contextually specific factors.
- Ensure a consistent approach to research ethics. If researchers don't have access to an ethics committee or board, at their institution for example, GDN should seek to facilitate connections to an ethical review board elsewhere.
- Ensure that the funding provided is appropriate to the scope of the research and takes into account the differential cost of doing research in different countries.

Research dissemination

GDN is already making good progress in supporting the dissemination of research outputs and in making research accessible to a wider audience. Expanding support to research teams for dissemination and policy engagement will be crucial if the scale up of the Doing Research project is to lead to tangible improvements in the social science research environment.

- Invest in building the capacity of researchers to engage with policy makers to enhance the policy uptake of their research.
- Extend the mentoring relationship to cover the development of academic articles. Encourage publication of academic papers in open access journals.
- Provide additional funding ring-fenced for the dissemination phase, to support policy dialogues, events, meetings and other opportunities for policy engagement.
- Continue to facilitate access to digital platforms, including blogs and webinars.
- Continue seeking ways to enhance the visibility of researchers from developing countries in international research and policy forms, including by establishing strong platforms that can amplify their research.
- Strengthen the link between research and policy. This could include additional mentoring, recruitment of mentors and PIs with relevant networks of policy makers, support for developing outputs that are targeted at policy makers and research users, and facilitated connections with policy makers.

13.2. Future research teams

- Actively seek input from your mentor and from GDN. Request additional specific feedback and expertise where required.
- Make contact with each other and with research teams from the pilot.
- Approach the workshops seeking to learn from the experiences of other teams.
- Try to invite junior members of the team to participate in the project and in the cross-fertilisation of ideas, within and between teams.
- Seek opportunities to build capacity of junior researchers and to transfer knowledge and opportunities gained through attendance at workshops.

13.3. Donors

- Donors should provide flexible funding for research projects such as this. Unanticipated expenses and unavoidable delays may be caused by political instability and logistical challenges, amongst other issues.
- The cost of conducting research differs significantly between countries. This is affected by various factors, including quality of infrastructure and ease of travel between institutions, and expectations of research participants, including per diems. Donors should take this into consideration when establishing the size of grant funding.

Annexes

Annex 1 - Research teams and associated mentors

Research team	Lead Institution	Principal Investigator	Title	External Advisor
Cambodia	Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace	Sovachana Pou (Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and	Doing Research in Cambodia: Making Models that Build Capacity	Tim Kelsall / Ian Carter

		Peace)		
Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire	Centre d'Étude et de Recherche en Économie et Gestion (CEREG), l'Université de Yaoundé II-Soa & Cellule d'Analyse de Politiques Economiques du CIRES (CAPEC), Centre Ivoirien de Recherches Economique et Sociale, Côte d'Ivoire	Benjamin Fomba Kamga (Université de Yaoundé II-Soa)	Evaluation of the Environment of Research in Social Sciences: the Case of the Ivory Coast	Michel Carton
India and Bangladesh	Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)	Saumen Chattopadhyay (JNU)	Doing Research - Assessing the Social Science Research Environment in Bangladesh and India	V. Lynn Meek
Indonesia	Puskakom Universitas Indonesia, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences; Centre for Innovation, Policy and Governance, Indonesia (CIPG)	Inaya Rakhmani (PUI)	Reforming Research in Indonesia: policies and practice	V. Lynn Meek
Niger	Think Tank Economie Politique et Gouvernance Autonome (EPGA)	Abdourahma Idrissa (EPGA)	Wanting Knowledge: Social Science Research and the Demand Factor in a Low-Income Country – The Case of Niger	Benjamin Buclet
Peru, Bolivia and Paraguay	Group for the Analysis of Development (GRADE)	María Balarin (GRADE)	The dynamics of social research production, circulation and use in Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru: a comparative study	Hebe Vessuri
South Africa	University of KwaZulu-Natal	Cheryl Potgieter (University of KwaZulu-Natal)	Assessing the Environment for Social Science Research in Developing Countries: The Case of South Africa	Jo Hoffman

Annex 2 - Summary of interviews conducted at each stage

Research team	Interview - set 1	EA Interview 1	Interview - set 2	EA Interview 2	Online Survey
Cambodia	2	1	1	0	1
Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire	2	1	3	1	1
India and Bangladesh	3	1	3	1	1
Indonesia	2	*	1	*	1

Niger	1	1	1	1	1
Peru, Bolivia and Paraguay	2	0	1	0	2
South Africa	1	1	3	1	0
Total	**13**	**5**	**13**	**4**	**7**

* Professor Lynn Meek acted as EA to both the India and Bangladesh and Indonesia teams.

Annex 3 - list of interviews and IDs

ID	Date	Interview	Research team	Location
1	28/10/2015	Joseph Hoffman (EA)	South Africa	India
2	29/10/2015	Ahoure Alban and Benjamin Fomba Kamga	Cameroon and Ivory Coast	India
3	29/10/2015	Benjamin Buclet (EA)	Niger	India
4	29/10/2015	Inaya Rakhmani, Fajri Siregar	Indonesia	India
5	29/10/2015	Sovachana Pou and Courtney Work	Cambodia	India
6	29/10/2015	Ian Carter	Steering Committee	India
7	30/10/2015	María Balarin, Miguel Vera	Latin America	India
8	30/10/2015	Michel Carton (EA)	Cameroon and Ivory Coast	India
9	30/10/2015	Tawheed Reza Noor, Binay Kumar Pathak, Saumen Chattopadhyay	India and Bangladesh	India
10	30/10/2015	V. Lynn Meek (EA)	India and Bangladesh, Indonesia	India
11	12/11/2015	Abdourahmane Idrissa	Niger	Skype
12	18/12/2015	Urmilla Bob	South Africa	Skype
13	13/06/2016	Inaya Rakhmani	Indonesia	Skype
14	13/06/2016	Michel Carton (EA)	Cameroon and Ivory Coast	Skype
15	14/06/2016	Sovachana Pou	Cambodia	Skype
16	14/06/2016	V. Lynn Meek (EA)	India and Bangladesh, Indonesia	Skype
17	15/06/2016	Abdourahmane Idrissa	Niger	Skype
18	15/06/2016	Benjamin Buclet (EA)	Niger	Skype

19	16/06/2016	Joseph Hoffman (EA)	South Africa	Skype
20	16/06/2016	Tawheed Reza Noor, Binay Kumar Pathak, Saumen Chattopadhyay	India and Bangladesh	Skype
21	17/06/2016	Ahoure Alban	Ivory Coast	Skype
22	28/06/2016	Benjamin Fomba Kamga and Vincent de Paul	Cameroon	Skype
23	28/06/2016	Cheryl Potgieter, Urmilla Bob and Radhamany Sooryamoorthy	South Africa	Skype
24	28/06/2016	María Balarin	Peru	Skype
25	02/06/2016	Ramona Angelescu Naqvi and Clement Gevaudan	GDN staff	Skype

Annex 4 – Case study framework

Stage	Global level	Research team level
Selection	Inception workshop, designing project objectives	Motivations of the research teams, selection of team members
Methodology	Selection of the research teams, programme methodology design	Research proposal, methodology workshop
Research	-	Data gathering, mentoring, analysis and draft reports
Peer-review	Review of draft reports	Peer review workshop, feedback and redrafting of final reports
Dissemination of findings	Attendance at awareness raising forums and research events	Dissemination of research papers, national-level events to influence policy makers
Scale-up	Development of comparative framework, concept note for next phase	-

Annex 5 – Report analysis framework

Criteria	Description

Conceptual framing and originality	Does the research acknowledge and draw on existing research? To what extent is it original? Does it construct a conceptual framework?
Appropriateness / completeness	Are the methods chosen well suited to the research question? To what extent does the research address the questions put forward by GDN? To what extent does it provide *measurable* indicators Including: • How research is produced • How research capacity building is organised • How demand for research emerges
Validity / Credibility	To what extent does the study demonstrate measurement validity? What is the believability or credibility of the research findings from the perspective of the members or study participants or stakeholders? For example, is there a stage for inclusion of member checking into the findings? Did the research describe and account for the ethics considerations?
Confirmable	To what extent can the research findings be confirmed or corroborated by others? For example, does the research include a detailed description of the methodology that would allow others to replicate the study? Do the researchers account for individual subjectivity or bias in their methodology?
Dependability and cultural sensitivity	To what extent does the study consider context-specific cultural factors? Are the researchers accounting for or describing changing contexts? How consistent are the findings?
Transferability / Comparability	To what degree can findings be transferred or generalised to other settings, contexts, or populations? To what extent does the study detail its underlying research methods, contexts, and assumptions?

Annex 6 – List of additional dissemination conferences and products

Niger:

- Conference in Niger – 14 January
- Published a news article in *Le Républicain*
- GDN Annual Conference –18 March
- Blog article in the Doing Research Dialoge Space[5]

Peru, Bolivia and Paraguay:

- International conference in France –21-22 January
- GDN Annual Conference – 18 March
- Local presentations in each country – March and April
- Blog article in the Doing Research Dialogue Space

Indonesia:

- Published a news article in *the Conversation*[6]
- GDN Annual Conference – 18 March
- Joint Expert Panel with the Knowledge Sector Initiative in Indonesia – 6 April
- Blog article in the Doing Research Dialogue Space
- Developed infographics[7]

Cambodia:

- Published a news article in the *Phnom Penh Post*[8] and in *VOA Cambodia*[9]
- 6 local debriefing events – held in December and January
- Launch ceremony of the book in Cambodia – 1st April
- Blog article in the Doing Research Dialogue Space
- Published YouTube videos[10]

[5] http://www.researchtoaction.org/dialogue/gdn-doing-research/
[6] http://theconversation.com/insularity-leaves-indonesia-trailing-behind-in-the-world-of-social-research-53973
[7] http://www.ksi-indonesia.org/files/1465292590$1$M8MQA$.pdf
[8] http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/cambodian-research-lagging
[9] http://www.voacambodia.com/a/cambodia-universities-need-to-do-research-say-scholars/3385303.html
[10] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qXPqMBa6LcM and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_XyMetexpM

South Africa:

- International conference in South Africa – 22-23 September

Cameroon and Cote d'Ivoire

- Conference in Cameroon – 30 April
- Seminar in Cote d'Ivoire – 29 April
- Published news articles in *Frat Mat*, *Le Nouveau Courrier* and *l'Inter*

India and Bangladesh:

- Roundtable in Bangladesh – held on 27 January
- Roundtable in India – 9-10 March

General activities facilitated by GDN:

- Public debate, Delhi - 30 October 2015
- GDN public conference, Peru – 18 March 2016
- Two webinars, May – July 2016

Annex 7 - Interview templates

Interview template: Research teams October 2015

1. Please briefly describe how you went about collecting the data for the research
2. What input, structure or guidance did GDN give in the development of your research objectives and methodology?
3. From your perspective, what are the most interesting findings of the research so far?
4. What was your greatest challenge during the research process?
5. What did you learn from the methodology workshop? How did you apply what you had learnt?
6. How did you select the factors that you would measure?
7. How did you take account for variation between different research disciplines?
8. How did your team work together to collect the data?
9. How did your team work on the analysis and writing?
10. To what extent do you think your work relates to the work of other research teams?
11. What support has your mentor provided so far? What was most helpful? How could the support of your mentor be improved?
12. What support has GDN provided so far? How have the interactions with the GDN team helped/hindered in the research?
13. What do you think are the areas of weakness in your research report? What could you have done differently?
14. What are your plans for the next phase of the research?
15. What advice would you give to future research teams undertaking this project in their own countries?

Interview template: External Advisors October 2015

1. Please briefly describe your role in *Doing Research* so far

2. Please describe the support you have given to [*name the country research team*]
3. How frequently does the research team ask for your advice? What type of input are they looking for?
4. How do you think the mentoring role could be improved?
5. To what extent have you coordinated or communicated with other mentors about the research?
6. From your perspective, what are the most interesting findings of the [*country*] research so far?
7. How does the research compare to your expectations for the report?
8. What feedback have you given so far? In what format? [Is there anything he/she can provide?]
9. Do you feel that the research team has taken on your feedback?
10. What are the key challenges for the [*country*] research teams?
11. To what extent do you think the research captures the social science research environment in [*country*]?
12. To what extent do you think the research can contribute to a comparative framework?
13. How do you think the research report could be improved?
14. What will be the next steps for the research team?

Interview template: Steering group October 2015

On steering committee:

1. Please briefly describe your role in *Doing Research*
2. What is the role of the steering committee?
3. How frequently does the GDN programme team ask for your advice? What type of input are they looking for?
4. How do you think the steering group's role could be strengthened?
5. From your perspective, what are the most interesting outcomes of the research project so far?
6. What are the key challenges for the project?
7. To what extent do you think the research captures the social science research environment in the pilot countries?
8. To what extent do you think the research collected can contribute to a comparative framework?
9. How do you think the *Doing Research* project could be improved?

On mentoring role:

1. Please describe the mentoring support you have given to [*name the country research team*]
2. How frequently does the research team ask for your advice? What type of input are they looking for?
3. How do you think the mentoring role could be improved?
4. To what extent have you coordinated or communicated with other mentors about the research?
5. How does the research compare to your expectations for the report?
6. What feedback have you given so far? In what format? [Is there anything he/she can provide?]
7. Do you feel that the research team has taken on your feedback?
8. How do you think the research report could be improved?

Interview template: Research teams June 2016

1. What is your perspective on the dissemination phase? Who has shown most interest in the project?
2. What input, structure or guidance did GDN give in the development of your research and dissemination since Oct 2015?
3. What were your expectations of support from GDN? Did GDN fulfil those expectations?
4. What were your expectations for support from your mentor? Were you clear on roles and responsibilities for you and your mentor?
5. What contact have you had with your mentor and other research teams between workshops? What would be the most appropriate frequency of communication with your mentor?
6. What aspect of support (for example, the workshops, or the mentoring) has had the most significant influence on your research?
7. Are there ways in which the use of technology could be improved to facilitate collaboration and communication (with other teams or your mentor)?
8. What have you personally learned through the process? Have you gained any new skills? If so, what and how?
9. Was the funding amount and process appropriate?
10. What was your greatest challenge during the research process?
11. Is there anything you would do differently if you were to repeat this research?
12. Do you have any future plans for the research?
13. Is there anything else that you would like to add, that we have not already covered?

Interview template: External Advisors June 2016

1. What is your perspective on how the dissemination phase has gone for this team?
2. What input, structure or guidance did you give to the team in the development of their research and dissemination since October 2015?
3. What were the main achievements of and challenges experienced by this research team?
4. How do the outputs of this research compare to your expectations?
5. What is your perspective on the amount of funding provided to the research teams? Do you think the funding and time available is sufficient to produce high quality research?
6. Were the roles and responsibilities for you as a mentor, and for the research team, clear from the outset?
7. How much contact have you had with your research team? What would be the most appropriate frequency of communication?
8. Are there ways in which the use of technology could be improved to facilitate collaboration and communication (with your team or other mentors)?
9. How did GDN support you in your role as a mentor? Would you have benefitted from any additional involvement or support from GDN?
10. What do you think your main impact/ influence on this team's research has been?
11. What is your perspective on the effectiveness of the *Doing Research* workshops? How could they be improved?
12. Is there anything you would do differently if GDN were to repeat this project?
13. What is your perspective on the usefulness of this research project for the creation of a *Doing Research* index?
14. Is there anything else that you would like to add, that we have not already covered?

Annex 7 - Online survey

Name: [Optional]

Research team: [drop-down list]
I would like my responses to be used anonymously: [tick box]

1. Please describe your role in the research team
[open]

2. Please rate the following elements of the *Doing Research* programme:
[1 = very poor | 2 = quite poor | 3 = average | 4 = quite good | 5 = very good]

- The scope of the research project in the ToR
- The frequency of mentoring during the research phase
- The quality of the mentoring during the research phase
- The usefulness of the methodology workshop
- The usefulness of the peer review workshop
- The frequency of mentoring during the research review phase
- The quality of mentoring during the research review phase
- The quality of your final research report
- The effectiveness of your team's dissemination activities so far
- The support provided by GDN programme staff

3. To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the *Doing Research* project?
[1 = I disagree strongly | 2 = I disagree | 3 = I neither agree nor disagree | 4 = I agree | 5 = I agree strongly]

- Our report incorporates interdisciplinary perspectives
- Our mentor encouraged us to consider interdisciplinary perspectives
- GDN encouraged us to consider interdisciplinary perspectives
- Our work benefited from ideas shared by other research teams
- The indicators suggested in the Call for Proposals were appropriate to the research
- The indicators identified in our team's work are comparable to the indicators identified by other teams
- The findings of our team's research are similar to the findings of other research teams
- The amount of funding provided was appropriate to the scope of the research

4. To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding your research?
[1 = I disagree strongly | 2 = I disagree | 3 = I neither agree nor disagree | 4 = I agree | 5 = I agree strongly]

- The research is original
- The research findings are context-specific
- The methods chosen were well suited to the research questions
- The research provides measurable indicators for assessing the country's social science research environment
- Research participants (such as other academics, university management, policy makers, or other research users) were involved in reviewing the findings
- The research includes a description of the methodology, limitations and assumptions
- The research methods can be applied in other country contexts

5. Please select all of the academic disciplines that have informed your work
[open]

6. What was the mentor's external advisor's most important contribution to your research?

[open]

7. How could the support from your mentor external advisor be improved?
[open]

8. What was the most helpful thing you learned at the peer review workshop?
[open]

9. How many senior policy makers has your team engaged with so far in the dissemination activities?
[0-9 | 10-19 | 20-39 | 40-59 | 60-99 | 100+]

10. What has been the most important element of the dissemination activities so far?
[open]

5. Do you have plans for additional dissemination activities?
[open]

6. How could GDN's support for the dissemination phase be improved?
[open]

7. Please identify your response to the following statements:
[1 = I disagree strongly | 2 = I disagree | 3 = I neither agree nor disagree | 4 = I agree | 5 = I agree strongly]

- *Doing Research* is a unique research project in my country
- My University (or Institution) believes this research is important
- The research will help my University (or Institution) to advocate for a better social science research environment
- A significant number of academics in my country are demonstrating interest in the research findings
- A significant number of policy makers in my country are demonstrating interest in the research findings
- This project has increased my research skills
- *Doing Research* is an important research project that should be conducted in other countries

8. What are your plans for further use of the research after completion of the *Doing Research* project?
[open]

9. Do you have any additional comments?

[open]